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# Tyler Morning Telegraph

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## Nonprofit discusses experience fighting Ebola outbreak

LEEZA MEYER

Covered head to toe in whatever personal protective equipment is available, doctors inside the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda are racing against time to save patients and contain the world's third-largest Ebola virus outbreak.

Doctors on Mission International (DOMI), a Ugandan-based Christian volunteer nonprofit founded in 2023, unites health care professionals to provide free care to underserved, rural and often conflict-stricken communities. DOMI deployed personnel to the DRC's Ituri Province and North Kivu in May, partnering with Amigos Internacionales, a Whitehouse-based nonprofit that builds mission connections in East Africa for humanitarian needs.

Dr. Paul Mulyamboga

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On May 15, the DRC and Uganda declared outbreaks of Ebola, a deadly viral disease. The World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of

EBOLA >> PAGE 3A

Team members transfer an Ebola patient into a wheelchair. (Amigos Internacionales/Contributed Photo)

## County hears budget

# Amigos Internacionales Historical Archive

## Volume 1

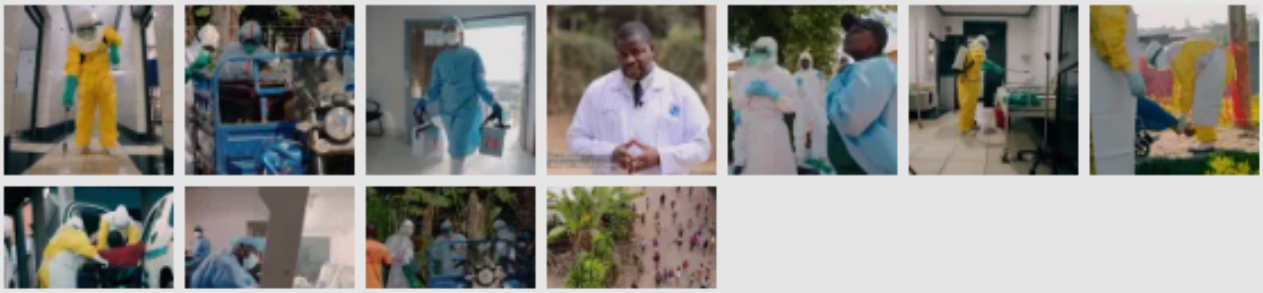
## Tyler Morning Telegraph — Heroes on the Front Line

Official archival edition preserving the July 10, 2026 front-page Tyler Morning Telegraph coverage of the Amigos Internacionales Ebola response in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Preserved by Amigos Internacionales as part of its permanent historical archive documenting humanitarian, medical, educational, and disaster-response ministries.**

# Contributed Field Photographs Published with the Article

Ebola decontamination in hospital corridor. (Amigos Internacionales/Contributed Photograph)



These photographs accompanied the published story and document the frontline Ebola response supported by Amigos Internacionales.

# Complete Article

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On May 15, the DRC and Uganda declared outbreaks of Ebola, a deadly viral disease. The World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern two days later. As of July 4, the DRC had 1,561 confirmed cases and 506 deaths, Uganda had 20 confirmed cases and two deaths and France had one confirmed case, totaling 1,582 confirmed cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

DOMI has approximately 150 volunteer doctors, surgeons, nurses and other medical professionals from across Africa who regularly volunteer in remote areas to conduct health examinations and surgeries, such as cleft palate surgery, and are deployed to assist with epidemics like Ebola and cholera. DOMI is funded through donations, grants, self-funded contributions from volunteers and partnerships such as Amigos Internacionales.

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"These are communities that have been cut off from the rest of society because of fear of spreading this disease to other communities, so because of that, everyone is fearing to go support them and treat them," Mulyamboga said. "Whereas for us, it's an opportunity for us to share the love we have and most importantly the skills we have with those children and people that have been isolated."

Mulyamboga said Ebola spreads through direct contact with infected bodily fluids and the Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD) is responsible for the current outbreak. The virus incubates from two to 21 days, sometimes without symptoms, before causing flu-like symptoms around the eighth to 10th day, followed by severe symptoms such as hemorrhagic fever, which damages the body's immune system and internal organs and can lead to uncontrollable bleeding.

"It's scary, and the emotions have come through," Mulyamboga said. "But again, you remember the noble cause that you signed up for and you go out there to make sure that you treat and be the best of a doctor and a surgeon you can be to those children."

While Ebola affects people of all ages, the highest number of reported cases is among people ages 35 to 44, with a fatality rate of about 50 percent. Infected children younger than 5 have a fatality rate of about 90 percent, according to the CDC.

Mulyamboga said his team conducts Ebola surveillance, contact tracing, isolation and treatment, community education and safe burials to slow the spread of the virus while working closely with local communities.

View from the front lines

Mulyamboga's team is split between the two hardest-hit districts, where members work in temporary structures because of limited health care infrastructure, sometimes using flashlights in the dark.

"They send us in conjunction with our sister partners on the ground and also with security forces that we're working with into the communities where we are," Mulyamboga said. "Once we bring them into our isolation centers, we are able to treat them."

There are currently no U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved antiviral drugs or vaccines for BVD, unlike other Ebola strains. Treatment relies heavily on intravenous hydration, blood pressure management and the body's immune system to fight the virus, making efforts to contain the outbreak paramount, Mulyamboga said.

"The main aim is for us to be in position to protect the communities and the rest of the other people that have not been exposed to the virus," Mulyamboga said. "Because of the work, it is a bit tiresome. The numbers are huge."

DOMI teams oversee areas with more than 2.7 million people, and Mulyamboga said only about 50,000 people have been reached.

Teams work with village leaders, health officials, churches, radio stations and community organizations to go door to door conducting Ebola screenings and educating the public on the disease, helping reduce fear and misinformation, Mulyamboga said.

“It is also for people to be able to trust us and for them to know that we are not in there to do anything wrong, but rather to help them to achieve the health that they need,” Mulyamboga said.

Challenges facing the mission

DOMI faces many challenges, including supply shortages, armed conflict involving groups such as the Lord’s Resistance Army, displaced people, poverty, weak health systems, distrust and remote terrain, Mulyamboga said.

“From personal protective equipment, we have few of those, to the supplies that we need in isolation units that we are creating and also in our surveillance,” Mulyamboga said. “We do not just wake up and walk. We need fuel for us to be able to get over the rural terrain of North Kivu and to get the supplies over there.”

Patrick Kibwota, director of operations in Uganda for Amigos Internacionales, said many nonprofits in Uganda were affected by the shutdown of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)- funded programs.

In January 2025, the Trump administration imposed a 90-day foreign aid freeze, followed by the Rescissions Act of 2025, which resulted in the rescission of $8 million in USAID and foreign aid funding that supported global health initiatives and crisis relief. Kibwota said nonprofits such as DOMI now rely solely on nonprofit partnerships, including Amigos Internacionales, and donations for funding.

“The program in its inception, even in Uganda, it was doing a lot in the health sector, in the education sector and it was really enormous, but it was suddenly shut,” Kibwota said. “Many nonprofits (are) still confused on what really happened and I would say some of them have been victim(s) of circumstance, which is beyond our control.”

Kibwota said in one area, the number of active organizations reportedly declined from about 87 to 17, and the remaining organizations continue to operate with significantly fewer resources.

“In the procurement of some of the supplies, like for surgical supplies, you really need to import so you need like three to four months of planning,” Kibwota said. “That challenge is usually financial because for you to scale up and replicate the health averages, even when we received funding, it was still not enough. For you to reach out more and replicate that model to all those vulnerable communities, you need the enough financial backing.”

Financial limitations make it difficult to expand services despite having volunteers available, resulting in demand often exceeding capacity and shortages in PPE, medical supplies and medications, transportation and fuel and funding for logistics, Kibwota said.

“The volunteers can be available, but if the supplies are not there, it’s as good as none,” Kibwota said. “Timely access to those supplies is what means everything.”

Funding gaps

Michael Ryer, CEO and president of Amigos Internacionales, said his nonprofit lost grants supporting other programs but has tried to fill the gaps left by reduced international aid.

“Supplies are difficult because even suppliers don’t know how to plan for what’s happening because now this major purchaser of their supplies is just shut down,” Ryer said.

Ryer said Amigos Internacionales spent approximately $185,000 on unplanned emergency medical responses last year despite budgeting about $95,000.

“When a 2,000-patient camp turns into a 4,000-patient camp, do we turn those guys away or do we send more money and more supplies?” Ryer said. “You don’t turn them away, so that stretches all the budgets everywhere.”

The organization is planning grant applications and is raising $25,000 for DOMI’s PPE, medical supplies, medications, isolation unit operations, patient food and care and transportation and surveillance activities, Ryer said.

“My job is to help people, help others,” Ryer said. “‘Don’t grow weary in doing good’ (Galatians 6:9) is one of our key verses. We’re there in the long run.”

Mulyamboga said even though the death total increased, he has seen 500 Ebola patients make a full recovery.

“Seeing someone who was almost dying of Ebola get well is a privilege,” Mulyamboga said.

Ryer said the organization returns about $55 in medical services for every dollar donated and praised Mulyamboga and Kibwota for their bravery and work to fight the outbreak.

“Those are the heroes on the front line,” Ryer said.

The human impact
Mulyamboga’s team relies on faith, team support and a shared mission to stay motivated during difficult outbreaks.

“We check on our second family,” Mulyamboga said. “The second family is the team you go with, so no one is in a community alone and that team and community becomes your family, and we try as much as possible to care for each other.”

Mulyamboga said DOMI also has a mental health team to care for doctors as they care for patients, and personnel have opportunities to contact their families during deployment.

“The most primary goal is for us to be as together as possible because when we are together we can accomplish everything else,” Mulyamboga said. “It is still hard with all of that, but we try.”

Local pastors also accompany many medical missions and are trained in trauma counseling. Local churches continue to provide emotional and spiritual support even after the team leaves a particular area, Ryer said.

“It’s not just medical, but it’s spiritual as well as physical,” Ryer said.

Ryer said part of the mission of Amigos Internacionales and DOMI is to create generational change rather than simply addressing one problem and leaving people behind.

“I don’t want to give somebody a chicken nugget today and then they’re hungry tomorrow,” Ryer said. “We want to affect change that will affect their life and livelihood and this Ebola outreach is just a natural part of this to restore health so that these people that are isolated are getting back into the community and back to their families, and that’s important to us.”

Mulyamboga said the DOMI and Amigos Internacionales understand communities in eastern DRC have faced conflict and instability for decades and often feel forgotten, and they try to bridge that gap.

“We have to understand that these are people with emotions, feelings, with families and people who are having children,” Mulyamboga said. “They are just like us, and the only difference is that they are in a region which has been infested with a lot of epidemics and because of that they have been isolated away from the rest of the world, so that comes with a lot of emotional drain on them.”

Through donations, volunteering and raising awareness about the virus and the need for supplies, DOMI’s mission becomes easier to accomplish.

“This is an opportunity for someone to actually do something impactful in these communities for these people,” Mulyamboga said. “We continue because every effort counts in this.”

To keep up with current updates on DOMI’s work on the ground or to donate, visit www.amigosii.org/ebola.

For more information about Amigos Internacionales, visit www.amigosii.org and read more about their mission at tylerpaper.com/2026/04/26/from-east-texas-to-east-africa-whitehouse-nonprofit-brings-medical-care-education-to-remote-communities/.

For more information about DOMI, visit www.doctorsonmissionint.org.

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